

The Comicall Historie of

To raise a present summe; therefore goe forth,
Trie what my credit can in *Venice* doe,
That shall be rackt even to the uttermost,
To furnish thee to *Belmount* to faire *Portia*.
Goe presently enquire, and so will I,
Where money is, and I no question make
To have it of my trust, or for my sake.

Exeunt.

Enter *Portia* with her waiting-woman *Nerrissa*.

Por. By my troth *Nerrissa*, my little body is a weary of this great world.

Ner. You would be, sweet Madam, if your miseries were in the same abundance as your good fortunes are: and yet for ought I see, they are as sick that surfeit with too much, as they that starve with nothing; it is no meane happines therefore to be seated in the meane, superfluitie comes sooner by white haire, but compendencie lives longer.

Por. Good sentences, and well pronounc'd.

Ner. They would be better if well follow'd.

Por. If to do were as easie as to know what were good to do, Chappels had beene Churches, and poore mens cottages Princes Pallaces, it is a good divine that followes his owne instructions, I can easie teach twenty what were good to be done, then to be one of the twenty to follow mine own teaching: the braine may devise lawes for the blood, but a hote temper leapes ore a cold decree, such a hare is madnes the youth, to skip ore the meshes of good counsell the cripple; but this reasoning is not in the fashion to choose me a husband, O mee the word choose, I may neither choose who I would, nor refuse who I dislike, so is the wil of a lying daughter curbd by the will of a dead father: is it not harde *Nerrissa*, that I cannot choose one, nor refuse none.

Ner. Your Father was ever vertuous, and holy men at their death have good inspirations, therefore the lottry that he hath devised in these three chests of gold, silver, and leade, vvhenceof who chooses his meaning chooses you, will no doubt never be chosen by any rightly, but one who you shall rightly love: But what warmth is there in your affection towards any of these Princely suiters that are already come?

Por.

the Merchant of Venice.

Por. I pray thee over-name them, and as thou namest them, I will describe them, and according to my description, levell at my affection.

Ner. First there is the *Neopolitane* Prince.

Por. I, that's a colt indeed, for he doth nothing but talke of his horse, and he makes it a great appropriation to his owne good parts, that he can shooe him himselfe: I am much afeard my Ladie his mother plaid false with a Smith.

Ner. Then is there the Countie *Palentine*.

Por. He doth nothing but frowne (as who should say, and you will not have me, choose; he heares merry tales and smiles not; I feare hee will prove the weeping Philosopher vvhhen hee growes old, being so full of unmannerly sadnesse in his youth.) I had rather be married to a Deathf-head with a bone in his mouth, than to either of these: God defend me from these two.

Ner. How say you by the French Lord, *Monsieur Le Boune*?

Por. God made him, and therefore let him passe for a man, in truth I know it is a sin to be a mocker, but hee, why hee hath a horse better than the *Neopolitans*, a better bad habite of frowning than the Count *Palentine*, he is every man in no man; if a Trassell sing, he straight fals a capering; he will fence with his owne shadow. If I should marry him, I should marry twenty husbands: if he would despise me, I would forgive him; for if he love me to madnesse, I shall never requite him.

Ner. What say you then to *Fanconbridge*, the young Baron of *England*?

Por. You know I say nothing to him, for he understands not me, nor I him: he hath neither Latine, French, nor Italian, and you will come into the Court, and sweare that I have a poore pennyworth in the English: he is a proper mans picture, but alas, who can converse with a dumbe show? how odly he is futed, I thinke he bought his doublet in *Italy*, his round hose in *France*, his bonnet in *Germanie*, and his behaviour every where.

Ner. What thinke you of the Scottissh Lord his neighbour?

Por. That he hath a neighbourly charitie in him; for he borrowed a box of the care of the Englishman, and swore he would pay him againe when he was able: I thinke the Frenchman became his Suretie, and seal'd under for another.

B

Ner.